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ABSTRACT

In an evaluation of college success in meeting its objectives, a ten-year overview of Harcum Junior College graduate follow-up studies is used to test the success of transfer programs, employment preparation, student satisfaction, and well-rounded career education. Findings of questionnaire surveys conducted each year during the summer months and averaging 52% response reveal that students accepted for advanced standing transfer rose from 40% in 1968 to 62% in 1973, and then decreased to 34% in 1977. In-state colleges accepting Harcum students also rose from 11 to a high of 22 in 1972, decreasing to 14 in 1977, with out-of-state transfers reaching a high of 51 colleges in 1970, and a low of 8 in 1977. Graduates accepted for full-time employment varied between 20% and 52%, with the low in the highest year of transfer (1973) and the average at 35%. Of a total of 641 respondents, 379 felt their program was very helpful in preparing them for their chosen field, 188 responded to "somewhat helpful", and 70 indicated programs were not helpful. Finally, liberal arts courses comprised from 20% (Real Estate) to 60% (Education Associate) of career curricula, indicating the college's success in providing a balance of general and vocational courses in programs of study. (RT)

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A Decade of Feedback Information From Harcum Graduates: 1968-1977

1. A number of years ago, Professor David Reisman of Harvard suggested that.... "a college must be tested by its products, the most obvious product being the alumni." At Harcum such 'testing' has been an integral part of an on-going self-evaluation program since academic 1967-68.

2. The free exchange of knowledge and information among professional personnel is recognized as one valuable means for effecting improvements in existing practices. It is to this very important objective that this, and all other IRReports, address themselves. The following paragraphs discuss various decade indicative records which furnish evaluation data relating to Harcum's educational effectiveness.

3. One of Harcum's stated objectives is to...."provide transfer programs paralleling those offered in the first two years of four-year collegiate programs of study." To what extent has the College achieved this objective during the past decade? To assess its 'success' in this dimension, each summer following graduation the College has asked that year's graduates to respond to a brief questionnaire.

4. Each year, (with one exception, 1976) half or more of the graduates have responded to these questionnaires: (over the past 10 years it has averaged a substantial 52%). It is therefore presumed that the results reported are reasonably representative for that year's graduates. As Table 1 below indicates, substantial proportions of each graduating class during this decade consistently have reported acceptance for transfer. However, it is particularly important to note that Table 1 reflects, at best, a conservative estimate, for experience has shown that it is literally impossible to obtain complete information. Some colleges/universities and Harcum graduates simply refuse to furnish transfer-acceptance information when requested. One might speculate that the decreased percentages reported for recent-past years reflects, in part, the 'tightened' economy in which fewer 2-year college graduates have continued on into 4-year programs. Also, greater numbers of graduates are entering occupational fields which do not require baccalaureate level educational preparation.

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Table 1:- Graduates Accepted for Advanced Standing Transfer

1968	= 40%	1973	= 62%
1969	= 44%	1974	= 61%
1970	= 53%	1975	= 56%
1971	= 49%	1976	= 30%
1972	= 53%	1977	= 34%

5. The extent to which the College has offered transfer-parallel programs which articulate readily with other post-secondary colleges and universities is evident in Table 2, which follows:

Table 2: - Colleges Accepting Harcum Graduates for Transfer

Year	In-state	Foreign	Out-state	Totals
1968	11	1	27	39
1969	12	2	36	50
1970	13	1	51	65
1971	12	1	21	34
1972	22	1	36	59
1973	17	1	18	36
1974	18	0	26	44
1975	13	1	10	25
1976	22	0	10	32
1977	14	0	8	22
Average	16	1	24	41

6. It has been said that the living history of a college is to be found in the accomplishments of its graduates. In this dimension of transfer articulation, the "living history" of Harcum over this past decade has been impressive, with a conservative average of 48% annually having reported transfer-acceptance of their Harcum academic credentials.

7. In addition to offering transfer-parallel programs as one of its primary objectives, the College also identifies as one of its major objectives to....."offer career preparation, equipping individuals to become contributing members of the working world." It terms of initial articulation into the world of work, to what extent has the College helped individuals?

8. The follow-up questionnaire referred to in paragraph 3 has furnished information permitting a general response to the query - "has the College helped equip individuals to become contributing members of the working world?"

Table 3: - Graduates Accepted for Employment

1968	= 31%	1973	= 20%
1969	= 52%	1974	= 30%
1970	= 38%	1975	= 33%
1971	= 39%	1976	= 50%
1972	= 23%	1977	= 37%

9. As Table 3 reveals, the first-employment 'success' of Harcum graduates over the past decade has averaged 35% annually. This does not reflect part-time, temporary, or summer employment, but jobs identified by the graduates as full-time. However, once again, it must be noted that the percentages reported are, at best, conservative estimates only: some individuals, for reasons best known to themselves, do not respond to questionnaires, therefore these results must be recognized as being 'incomplete'.

10. In addition, some graduates do not seek employment immediately upon graduation; they 'vacation' that summer before entering the world of work. However, experience has demonstrated that if the annual follow-up questionnaire survey is delayed until the fall months, there is usually a dramatic drop-off in the number of replies received. As a consequence, these partial returns are quite non-representative for the class as a whole. Therefore the survey continues to be mailed during the summer months in an effort to obtain more representative responses.

11. Among the targeted objectives the College identifies, it...."offers a balance of general and career-oriented courses in programs of study." Does it? Two sets of indicative records, discussed in the following paragraphs, suggest the answer is - "yes"!

12. In the 1973-75 catalog the following statement appears. "Underlying Harcum's academic programs is the principle that general education and education for a career are compatible. Specialized vocational courses and liberal arts courses complement each other. The total curriculum is directed towards the growth and development of each student, both as an individual and a responsible member of society."

13. The extent to which this basic educational objective is achieved may be ascertained, in part, from the data presented in Table 4, below. The "general education" courses are expressed as a percentage of total number of courses included in each career-oriented curriculum, the latter being defined as each program of study from which the graduate may immediately enter employment in that occupation without further formal schooling.

Table 4:- Percentage of "General Education" Courses in Career-oriented Curricula

Animal Technology	= 25%	Journalism/Public Relations	= 42%
Bus. Adm., Accounting	= 50%	Legal Secretarial	= 38%
Bus. Adm., Marketing	= 48%	Med. Lab Technician	= 45%
Business Education	= 45%	Med. Secretarial	= 38%
Business Management	= 40%	Med. Technologist	= 30%
Early Childhood Ed.	= 45%	Optometric Assistant	= 33%
Education Associate	= 60%	Physical Education	= 40%
Executive Secretarial	= 33%	Real Estate	= 20%
Fashion Design	= 45%	Retail Merchandising	= 43%
Interior Design	= 40%	Social Service	= 45%

14. Curricular offerings at Harcum are subject to on-going review. They are up-dated periodically to reflect job content shifts in the various occupational areas for which Harcum offers general education and career-training preparation.

15. During the past decade some 641 Harcum graduates responded to the statement ....."Believe Harcum prepared me for the field I have chosen." Table 5 summarizes their responses.

Table 5: Program Assessments by Graduates

Very Helpful	= 379
Somewhat Helpful	= 188
Not Helpful	= 70

16. As the data in Table 5 reveals, the largest number of respondents considered that their Harcum program was "Very Helpful", followed by "Somewhat Helpful". In all, some 89% evaluated their programs as being helpful. Only 11 out of each 100 respondents indicated a less-than-helpful assessment.

17. Basically, Harcum exists to help prepare individuals to live and work effectively in a rapidly changing world. Through its academic programs and academic-collateral services and activities, it offers students opportunities for extended educational experiences, stimulating the intellectual, social, spiritual, emotional, and physical development of the individual.

18. This decade report does suggest one general conclusion. In the main, when the College is "tested by its products"; i. e., the articulation of its graduates into the community at large, it has evidenced a record of effective results.

19. Mrs. Edith Harcum, the College's founder, was a remarkably far-sighted individual. She believed that those she undertook to educate must have a general education as well as an occupational skill. This basic policy continues at the College, some 62 years after its founding, attesting to its vigor and timeliness!

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